

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 AID-05 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2304

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6497

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJECT: NDP LEADER HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE

1. OPPOSITION NDP CHAIRMAN KIM YONG-SAM HELD PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 23 ON OCCASION OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ELECTION AS PARTY LEADER AND HIS RETURN FROM RECENT SOUTHEAST ASIAN TRIP.

2. MOST OF KIM'S REMARKS WERE BLAND AND SPECULATIVE COMMENTS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, A FIELD IN WHICH HE HAS LITTLE INFLUENCE AND LESS EXPERIENCE. HIS MOST NOTEWORTHY POINT WAS TO CALL ON THE ROKG TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH CHINA. AN INITIAL AP REPORT CITES KIM AS CLAIMING TO BE PREPARED TO VISIT PEKING FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS CLAIM IS LEFT OUT OF A LATER AP ITEM ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND, INDEED, IS NOT CARRIED IN KIM'S PREPARED STATEMENT AS DISTRIBUTED TO THE PRESS BY THE NDP.

3. ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS, KIM NOTED THAT CHANGES AT HOME AND ABROAD MADE IT UNNECESSARY FOR THE PEOPLE TO LIVE IN FEAR OF WAR. HE CALLED FOR A RETURN TO DEMOCRACY AND THE LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIAL

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EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." HE ALSO CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF THOSE PERSONS "UNFAIRLY ARRESTED UNDER THE EMERGENCY MEASURE." FINALLY, KIM URGED THAT THE CONSTITUTION BE AMENDED "IN NEAR FUTURE" AND THAT THERE BE A "REFORM OF THE

SYSTEM."

4. SEOUL PRESS AND RADIO AUGUST 23 PROMINENTLY REPORTED KIM'S REMARKS, CONCENTRATING ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON HIS FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF HIS COMMENTS ON EM-9, EM-9 ARRESTS, THE CONSTITUTION, OR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY.

COMMENT: IF THE ROKG WERE SO INCLINED, IT COULD EASILY CHARGE KIM WITH HAVING VIOLATED EM-9'S PROHIBITION AGAINST URGING AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OR "DEFAMING" EM-9 ITSELF. DENIED ACCESS TO THE CONTROLLED MEDIA, HOWEVER, KIM'S STATEMENTS ON THESE ISSUES WILL HAVE LITTLE IF ANY IMPACT IN KOREA. OUR GUESS IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CHOOSE TO IGNORE THEM. AS FAR AS THE FOREIGN AUDIENCE IS CONCERNED, KIM'S REMARKS WERE RELATIVELY CAUTIOUS AND MODERATE, AND THE ROKG MAY WELL FIND THEM USEFUL AS AN INDICATION THAT SOME LATITUDE FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY STILL EXISTS IN KOREA.
SNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

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